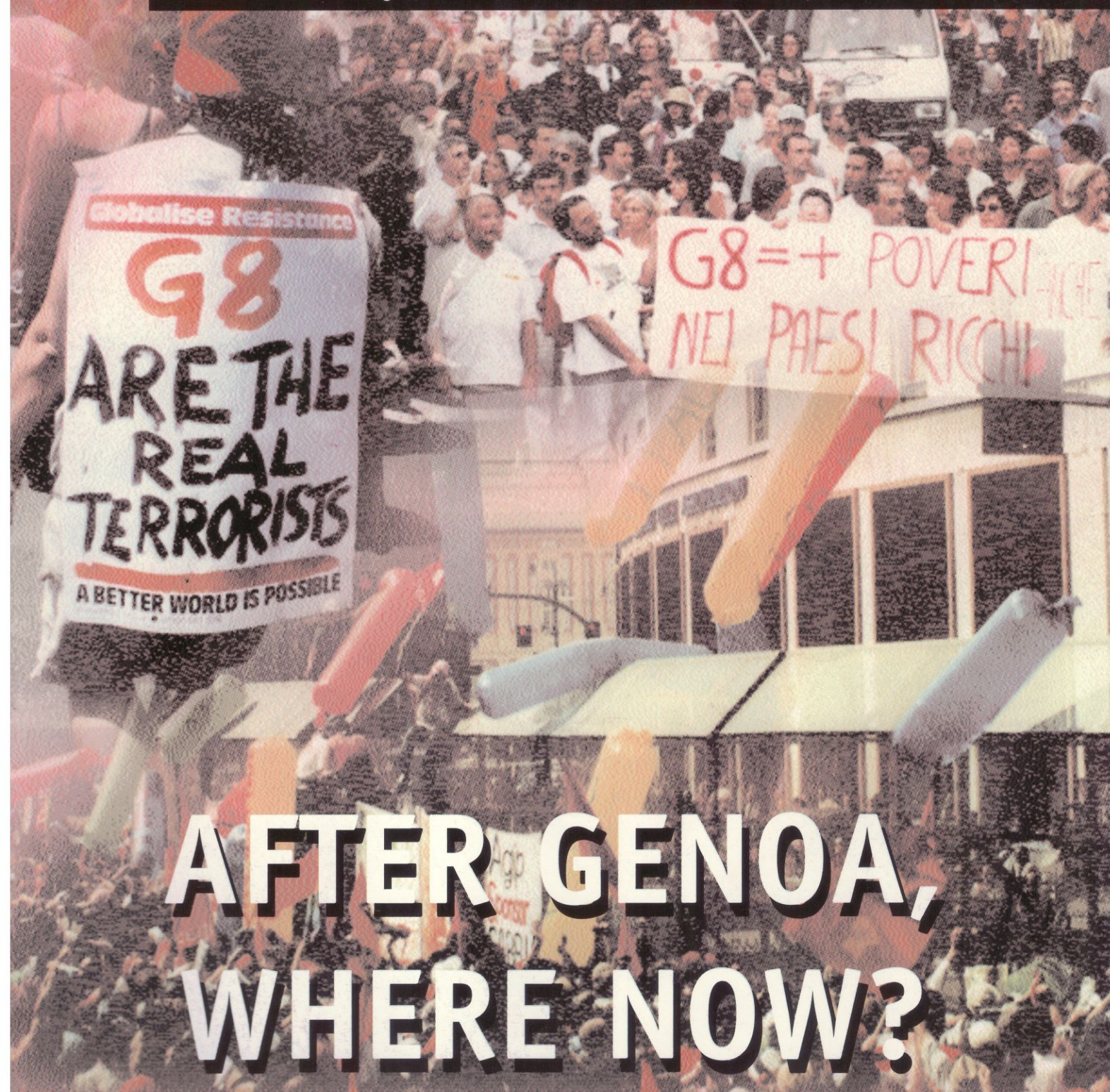


RESISTANCE

Ireland's Socialist Magazine

Issue No.2 September — October 2001 £ 2



AFTER GENOA, WHERE NOW?

- Farewell to the Celtic Tiger
- Asylum Seekers and Racism
- The Year of Intifada

The End of "Progressive" Unionism, Review of *Empire*, Inequality in Ireland

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EDITORIAL AND CONTENTS

From boom to bust

The growing number of lay offs brings home the degree to which the Celtic Tiger is an off-shoot of the American economy. Despite the Government's bluff and bluster, the Irish boom was always fragile and skewed towards where the quickest bucks could be made. US multinationals have received, on average, a 25% return on their Irish investments. Mega-profit returns brought them here and anything less has sent them away. The human factor simply does not come into it. Workers are left to wonder how the mortgage will be paid and how to find another job in a fast declining sector. Everyone else worries that their job may be next. These two sets of chain-reaction pinpoint the soulless anarchy of a system driven by profit.

Global capitalism is indeed looking pretty anarchic these days. Even *The Economist* is warning that this recession could be "the most synchronised since the 1930's". This time around, more closely interlocked economies will experience sharply the international domino effect. Our rulers' praise for the wonders of the "new economy" and the neoliberal agenda has therefore come to naught. They find themselves in a recession with many of the old characteristics of the pre-Second World War era. Such severe blows and about-turns to their system and their ideology weakens their confidence. Some in the European ruling class are now saying that cuts in public spending cannot continue if governments are to ride the social instability of a recession.

Our government has so far preferred to ignore the warning signs. They have done nothing to compel multinationals to put back some of their profits into the tax system. Disturbingly, they are already playing the racist card by linking potential job scarcity with the number of immigrant workers here. Even in the boom, workers saw their relative position in society deteriorate. Union leaders, with their cherished

partnership deals, have helped, not hindered, this process. The September Report from the Central Bank confirms that workers' share of the country's wealth has declined sharply relative to corporate profits during the fourteen years of social partnership. In a downturn, you can be sure, workers will be made to bear the brunt yet again and with even worse effects.

This is where the anti-capitalist protests in Genoa reported in this issue of *Resistance* are hugely important. This time the backdrop to slump is not triumphalist Reaganism and Thatcherism, but a world-wide protest movement that has scared the G8 leaders into meeting half-way up a mountain next time around.

The Irish Globalise Resistance contingent which joined the Genoa protests — comprising ecologists, bus workers, trade unionists, students, teachers, bin charges campaigners and anti-racists — was impressive in both its size and composition. Their experience at the protests — borne out by the reports in this issue — indicate that the anti-capitalist movement has taken root in Ireland.

What the anti-capitalist movement has shown is that generalising the struggle and the power of workers' action makes all the difference in terms of winning. In Spain 1,800 telephone engineers forced the government to intervene to grant them new jobs and early pensions when their privatised company, Sintel, closed down. In September, French Danone workers, threatened with redundancies, are organising nationwide protests which will draw in many of those involved in the anti-capitalist movement. The small but significant occupation in Peerless rugs in Athy has received the same broader local support and thrown up the same militancy. These are the models of resistance that can challenge the economic madness of capitalism.

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State sponsored profiteering

On Friday, August 3rd, 2001 (the bank holiday weekend), Mayo County Council granted planning permission to Enterprise Energy Ireland to construct a Gas Terminal in a rural part of North Mayo. This Terminal, to be sited on 165 hectares, will process natural gas from the Corrib Field in the North Atlantic. This Field, located about 50 miles off the Mayo coast, contains about one trillion cubic feet of natural gas which is worth approximately £2.2 billion.

Enterprise Energy Ireland is a company specifically created to exploit these gas reserves by three transnational corporations —Enterprise Oil UK, Marathon Oil USA, and Statoil Norway. The story of their exploitation of Irish natural gas supplies offers a frightening example of contemporary capitalism in its globalised corporate expression. This can be seen by outlining three aspects of the case.

Firstly, under the 1992 'Licensing Terms for Offshore Oil and Gas Exploration and Development', once an oil and gas company 'discovers' gas, and deems it commercially viable, "it shall be the duty of the Minister" to grant a license to the company (section 27.2).

In other words, the state has no control over whether, or when, to exploit fossil fuel reserves - the sole



Drilling for oil off the west coast

criterion is its profitability to private transnational corporations.

Secondly, under the financial terms governing oil and gas companies, the state takes no royalties on profits, holds no equity share and allows a total tax

write-off for exploration and development costs. Before 1992 the state could take between 8% and 16% in royalties, an equity share of up to 50%, and tax could only be written-off at 10% per year. The consequences of these changes are that no financial benefits at all will accrue to the Irish people.

Finally, the decision-making procedures for the granting of various licenses for this project have been in the remit of a number of administrative bodies: the County Council, the Department of Marine, and the Environmental Protection Agency. No democratic body of any kind will decide on any aspect of this project. The fears and concerns of the local community in North Mayo have no means of

democratic expression.

The consequence of all this is that we, the Irish people, will end up buying this gas from Enterprise Energy Ireland at full market price. Furthermore, in order to allow them bring the gas ashore and into the national gas grid, the state is paying, gratis, £50 million, out of the total £100 million, to construct a pipeline from North Mayo to Craughwell, Co. Galway where it will link up into the Dublin - Galway pipeline.

In this way, we end up paying a transnational corporation for the privilege of buying our own gas!

The total cost to Enterprise Energy Ireland of the project is estimated by them as £670 million, with an expected income of £2.2 billion. That no benefits accrue to the state, and that the people of North Mayo must bear all the costs of pollution arising from this enormous processing plant (comprising 15 hectares of physical building alone), appears not to be of concern to the government. Rarely has the hegemony of globalised capitalism been so clearly exposed.

Mark Garavan
Mayo Green Party

ATGWU Suspension

Reinstatement a fight for democracy



Mick O'Reilly— A thorn in the side of the establishment

"There must be many an employer saying, 'Christ, if only we could get away with that!'" So says a senior Northern union official, commenting on the suspension of ATGWU full-timers Mick O'Reilly and Eugene McGloin. The two were suspended without being given a reason. Five weeks later they were notified of the "charges". The people who will rule on the

charges are the same people who ordered the suspensions. "We'd have an automatic walkout if a factory manager tried that on", said the official. Practically without exception, grass-roots members around Ireland, when they hear the facts, agree that what's happened to O'Reilly and McGloin is unjust. It's when you move up through the structures that you begin to hear it said, "Well, Mick made enemies for himself"...."Or, It's not right, but we can't afford a row that could lead to a split". And at the very top, there are those whose minds have become gnarled and embittered over long years of

manoeuvring their way up through the union bureaucracy. They see the likes of O'Reilly as disruptive of the comfortable arrangements they've cobbled together with the bosses, government, industrial correspondents and bureaucrats from other unions.

They were alarmed when O'Reilly risked the wrath of SIPTU and the ICTU by bringing the ILDA train drivers into the ATGWU. They seethed at his support for the No side in the Nice referendum when they had assured the Dublin government that the unions were on-side. They hated the fact that O'Reilly made space

in the union for rank and file campaign groups.

Bill Morris, craving the type of centralised control which a CEO might have over a private business, was naturally well-disposed towards O'Reilly's enemies. The stage was set for small-minded factioneers at Transport House in Belfast meticulously to note every minor administrative cock-up or everyday piece of brusqueness and compile a "dossier" to enable Morris to suspend the two and install a safer, greasier, pair of hands. It is this background which makes the campaign for the reinstatement of O'Reilly and McGloin central to the struggle

ENVIRONMENT

Building for Faslane



Demonstrators in Faslane last year

In February this year, one thousand people gathered at the Faslane Trident base on the Clyde near Glasgow. They sat peacefully on the road and closed the nuclear missile submarine base for over five hours. 385 people were arrested including church leaders and politicians. Gluaiseacht, a movement of environmental and social justice groups around Ireland, brought 70 people there to take part in the action.

On Monday 22nd October, there will be another major blockade of the base. Blockading the main operational base is an effective way of disrupting the ongoing work of the Trident nuclear weapons system. Such a blockade allows everyone to get involved at a level with which they are comfortable - ranging from their simple but visible presence at the gates to being prepared to risk arrest by taking part in nonviolent civil resistance. The blockade is organised by Scottish CND, British CND and Trident Ploughshares.

On 8th July 1996, the International Court of Justice confirmed that the Declaration of St. Petersburg, the Hague Conventions, the Nuremberg Principles, the Geneva Conventions, and the Genocide Convention all apply to nuclear weapons. It stated very clearly that the threat or use of nuclear weapons is generally contrary to international humanitarian law. The Court could find no lawful circumstance for the threat or use of nuclear weapons.

No matter how you look at it, mass murder or conspiring to commit mass murder is simply wrong. That's what Trident does, that's what it's made for. It is our right as global citizens to disarm in a peaceful, careful and safe way a weapon system poised to kill thousands of people. This blockade is part of a global campaign for nuclear disarmament... won't you come and join us!

EOIN DUBSKY (Gluaiseacht)

*For details of how to get to Faslane
contact gluasieacht@ireland.com
or Globalise Resistance at 086 4098186*

FACT FILE — Transport

■ The government has embarked on a massive road construction programme. Every major city is to be linked to Dublin by motorway.

■ £4.7 billion has been allocated under the National Development Plan (2000-2006) to developing this road network.

■ Transport policy is a vital element of the NDP and the new roads are designed to meet the needs of big business by ensuring that goods can be transported to and from ports and key centres of population as quickly as possible.

■ Eleven major projects will be financed through public private partnerships. This works in a similar way to the Private Finance Initiative in Britain. Private companies will be allowed to design, build, finance and operate these roads. They will recoup part of their costs through the introduction of tolls.

■ The National Roads Authority has tentatively set the tolls at £1.10 per car for a longish stretch of motorway, with longer stretches charged at £1.65. Two tolls are proposed on the roads from Dublin to Galway, Limerick and Cork. In other words, roads that are built for the benefit of business will be paid for by ordinary road users to the benefit of private construction firms. (www.nra.ie)

■ Anti motorway groups have been set up in many counties. The Campaign for Sensible Transport has pointed out that the two new motorways that will pass through Kilkenny, for example, will divide communities and make existing roads into cul-de-sacs necessitating a five mile drive for some to get to the next interchange.

■ A scientist in UCC, Gerard Morgan, has raised serious concerns about the impact the road building will have on our natural and cultural heritage as well as the pollution implications. He is worried about aerial emissions and discharges into groundwater. Little prior research has been done by the NRA into this matter.

■ This road building will do nothing to ease the traffic congestion that has become such a problem in all urban areas. The annual CIE report exposed huge increases in journey times. A journey from Blanchardstown in West Dublin to the city centre which took an hour four years ago takes two hours today. Likewise the bus trip from Raheen to the University of Limerick takes forty minutes longer than it did in 1997.

■ While £4.7 billion is being pumped into road building over a six year period, public transport will receive just £2 billion.

■ Ireland's public transport system has suffered years of underfunding, receiving the lowest subsidy in the EU for many years. The recent increase in funding has gone mainly into fleet replacement rather than subsidising fares.

■ In 1997 5% of fares were subsidised by the state, today it has risen to 15% — the same level as London, but ridiculously low compared to the rest of Europe. In Rome, for example, 75% of fares are subsidised by government.

■ Mary O'Rourke, Minister for Transport, is intent on forcing through the privatisation agenda in the transport sector. Within two or three years it is planned that private companies will be able to tender for bus routes and as with the experience in London, they

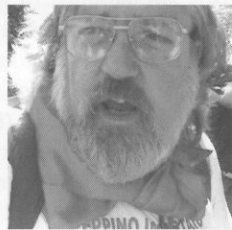


*Chronically underfunded —
our transport system*

Voices from Genoa . . .

Anti-capitalist demonstrators flocked to Genoa in July to protest at the G8 Summit. Hundreds of thousands of trade unionists, anti-debt campaigners, environmentalists, community activists, socialists, anarchists and many more from Italy and across the globe filled the streets of Genoa to demand a world for people not profit. The murder of Carlo Giuliani on Friday 20th of July by riot police showed just how far those who wield power are prepared to go to keep it. However, the sight of three hundred thousand people on the streets the next day was a clear sign that the movement against capitalism is growing in both size and determination. Here we give a flavour of that day when another world did truly seem possible.

I came to Genoa to help organise the protest. I never dreamed it would be possible that it would be like this. On the first day for the refugees march, the police said we had 50,000; we were expecting 10,000. Yesterday... yesterday was hard because it was direct action, and yesterday was sad because the police killed somebody. They shot him twice and they ran over him in the car when he'd been shot, and then they ran back over him. That's what they have to do to defend the G8. All of Italy was appalled.



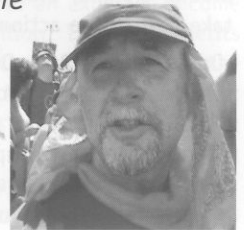
Today is massive! Absolutely massive! The lines stretch and stretch and stretch. I have no idea if we're talking 150,000 or 200,000 or half a million. I have no idea. I think the demonstration is such a size that no one will ever have any idea. Once it gets past a certain size you don't know. But what it shows is that on the issues we are fighting on, the majority of the people in every country in the world, in Britain, in the US, in India, in China... the majority support us. That is the power that is here.

I have spent a long time fighting in my trade union. I've spent a long time fighting in community campaigns, in little campaigns, in things where you grit your teeth and are defeated and now this is.... the long fucking Winter is over and Spring is here!

There is a new generation. But this generation in Italy are the sons and daughters of the people who fought twenty and thirty years ago and their parents are here too. This is a demonstration of the students, this is a demonstration of the activists but finally this is a demonstration of the working class. Everything has changed.

Jonathan Neale, (Globalise Resistance)

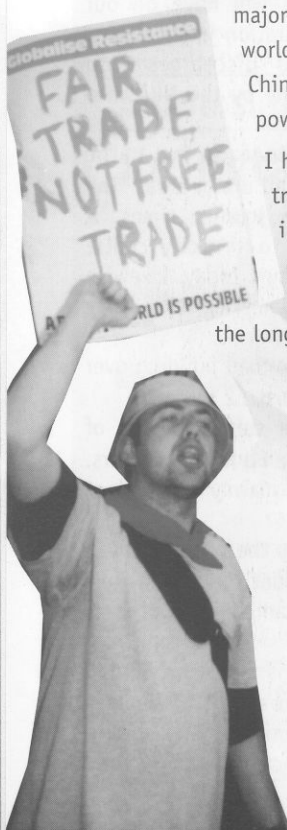
I'm here because we are engaged in a fight against privatisation in Dublin Bus. We want to link up with our comrades in the transport industry across Europe because we see this as one fight.



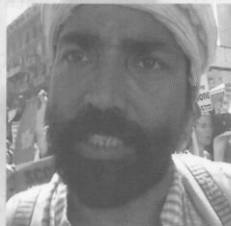
Initially I was very sceptical, like most trade unionists about this particular phenomenon assuming it was going to be something like 1968, but seeing it at close quarters there's a lot to be said for it..... A lot of young people, and that's what it's all about. It proves that the Thatcher and Reagan era is over and there's young people starting to pick up where we left off twenty years ago.

It's a fantastic opportunity to have a Europe-wide campaign against privatisation. A couple of criticisms. If this is to continue to bring in mainline trade unionists like myself and other people, more heavy stewarding is needed. The black bloc people can only do one thing, that is discredit the movement, stop it from growing, from linking up with people like ourselves, the older generation if you like.

Bill McCamley, SIPTU worker-director,
CIE regional executive, Dublin



Sixteen and a half years ago, on the night of the second of December, about forty tons of methyl cyanate used for making pesticides, leaked out of a factory owned by Union Carbide Corporation and surrounded people without warning. The gas poisoned over half a million people while they were sleeping. Since then people have been dying and having multi-system problems of the lungs, of the brain, of the reproductive system, of the immune system. Union Carbide has sold itself to the Dow Chemical Company which now refuses to accept liability for the Bhopal disaster.



We want to say that unless justice is done in Bhopal the entire world, and particularly the poor people in this world, are threatened with more multinational corporations coming and killing and maiming them. We are here to appeal to the international community of people in struggle to make Bhopal one of the significant issues in the struggle against globalisation and the G8.

Protester from Bhopal

We're here in Italy to demand political recognition because the PKK, the Party of Kurdistan Worker, is forbidden. In Turkey it is illegal. It is forbidden in England and Germany. So we want to demand to the European Union, to the world for political recognition.



We're here to protest against the G8 because what the G8 does to the world today is like what the Great Powers did in 1923 to the Kurds. In 1923, Kurdistan was divided and split up into parts of four other countries (Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Syria). Since then, Kurdistan has no one country any more and we protest against this still.

We are protesting for political recognition and for our identity as Kurdish people. We do not want anymore to be refugees from Turkey. We want to be respected as Kurdish people. This is why we are here today.

Francesca, PKK



BUILD GLOBALISE RESISTANCE

Genoa has shown the lengths to which the state will go to crush the anti-capitalist movement. Prior to the huge protests, the Italian state engaged in a dual strategy. Interior Minister Scajola held discussions with the Genoa Social Forum and agreed an understanding that the police would not use firearms and that the demonstrators would not carry 'offensive' weapons. However, simultaneously, government ministers leaked stories to the international press claiming that mortuaries had been cleared and two hundred body bags ordered. It was a deliberate attempt to scare off thousands of protesters from coming to Genoa.

Once the protest began, a ferocious and hyped up police force went into action to spread mass panic. Revolvers appeared even before the murder of Carlo Giuliani. On the day of direct action, every group including the pink 'frivolity contingent' were attacked — usually by a horde of riot police turning up unexpectedly from the sides and administering mass beatings. Five hundred people were arrested, often held incognito and subjected to beatings in police cells. Fini, leader of the fascist National Alliance whose roots go back to Mussolini, toured the police stations to encourage thuggery. The office of the Genoa Social Forum was attacked and blood spattered over the building.

The global elite believes that a concerted attempt must be made to split and demoralise the movement. The shooting of live rounds in Gothenburg was no accident. It was a signal of a more general ruling class offensive.

The same unleashing of state violence occurred in the sixties. The US police beat demonstrators at the Democratic Convention in Chicago in 1968. In Kent State University, the National Guard shot dead four anti-war students. The paratroopers were sent to Derry on Bloody Sunday with murderous intent. Behind the velvet glove of parliamentary democracy is a violent state machine that seeks to crush movements that go beyond the limit of acceptable - or ineffective - protests.

How do we respond?

We should not turn inwards and start issuing condemnations of sections of the movement. The state always tries to put its opponents onto the defensive to cover up its own violence. Despite the new attempts at repression and criminalisation, the anti-capitalist movement is still rising. Thousands will turn up to the next big events in Washington and Brussels. But more importantly, the courage of the demonstrators and their critique of corporate globalisation are helping to reawaken a more general mood of protest.

There are, of course, lessons to be learnt on the specific tactics. Up to now there has been a tendency to institutionalise a diversity of tactics. Instead of organising one major form of non-

Behind the velvet glove of parliamentary democracy is a violent state machine that seeks to crush movements that go beyond the limit of acceptable — or ineffective



violent direct action, for example, different groups are encouraged to do their own thing. In the case of the Black Bloc, the tactics were clearly counter-productive. The Italian State has long had a history of manipulating a 'strategy of tension' and the Black Bloc played straight into it. Evidence has accumulated that they were heavily infiltrated by the police; that they often took actions near to targets that the police wanted to attack; and that they moved about relatively unscathed while others were subject to terrible violence. The Black Bloc are organised on paramilitary lines, planning in secret and making no attempt to discuss their tactics before the entire movement. This combined with their hostility to any accountable structures makes them easy to infiltrate.

However, while there is a need to discuss the tactics of how to organise the street demonstrations, there are also larger issues at stake.

Luca Casarini, a spokesperson for the Italian Tute Bianche (White Overalls) — a large 'autonomist' network which dominates the far left — has said that 'a third way must be found between those who reject economic globalisation and those who opt for a symbolic gesture, like destroying a bank'. This way consisted in a shift from 'civil disobedience to social disobedience'.

The statement is significant because it contains a recognition that street tactics alone will not beat the militarised power of the state. The real issue is what is the most effective form of 'social disobedience'.

All struggles against the system can, in the words of Kevin Danaher, be seen as pinpricks on the backside of capitalism and are to be welcomed. But if the movement is not to burn itself out, it needs to connect with a power that can stop the flow of profit-making stone dead. This means prioritising and focussing on the workplaces which is where corporate capitalism builds itself up from. The decision of Globalise Resistance to link up with the workers occupation in Peerless Rugs in Athy is exactly the type of strategy that will take the movement forward.

Globalise Resistance has certainly put itself on the map after Genoa. Nearly two hundred Irish people travelled there and some of the report back meetings have been very big. The key thing now is to turn it into an open mass movement, which is built around monthly activist meetings that discuss, especially, how to 'Think Globally and Act Locally'.

Life and Death: A Question of Class

An examination of the relationship between illness, premature death, poverty and inequality.

It's official: the gap between rich and poor in Ireland has widened greatly in recent years while a higher proportion of people here live in poverty than in any other Western country except America. Poverty and inequality are sending 6,000 people to a premature grave in Ireland every single year.

These are just some of the disgraceful findings to emerge from three official reports published recently which document, definitively and damningly, the extent and effects of poverty and inequality in Ireland.

In recent years Ireland has experienced the fastest economic growth in Europe — and now has a higher average income per capita than any of our European neighbours, bar Luxembourg. If you're rich, it's a great place to live. Yet it now ranks sixteenth out of seventeen Western industrialised countries when it comes to human poverty. Only in America, where bare-knuckle capitalism has produced the world's most unequal society, does a higher proportion of the population live below the poverty line.

These are some of the findings of the United Nations Human Development Report, an annual publication that measures the performance of every country in the world in human terms. The report also shows that a staggering 23 per cent of the population here (almost a million people) are functionally illiterate.

After the UN report came another detailed survey, Monitoring Poverty Trends in Ireland, from the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI). This proves beyond doubt what

has long been assumed: the gap between rich and poor widened enormously during the unprecedented boom years of 1994 to 1998.

In 1994, seventeen people out of every hundred had to make do with an income that was below half the average income in the country (the 'official' measure of poverty). By 1998, however, 20 out of every 100 people were living in poverty.

When the ESRI looked at households, the situation was even worse. In 1994 eighteen out of every hundred households — around 216,000 families — had to get by on less than half the average household income (the poverty line), but by 1998 the number had risen to almost 25 households per 100. That's nearly 305,000 households living in poverty in 1998. In other words, in the period when we were all supposed to be thriving, almost 90,000 Irish families slipped below the official poverty line.

So much for the clichéd claim that 'a rising tide lifts all boats'. Quite the opposite: despite unprecedented wealth production,

the gap between the rich and the rest of us has got wider and wider.

The third report, Inequalities in Mortality, published by the Institute of Public Health, is the first all-Ireland study of death rates since 1921, and it provides a most damning indictment of the consequences of inequality. It shows that 6,000 poor people

die pre-maturely — at an unnecessarily young age — every single year on this island. These people could have lived seven or eight years longer if they had enjoyed the same life chances as rich people.

And on the island as a whole, another 5,500 people annually would be spared an early death if Ireland enjoyed the same life chances as the rest of the countries in the European Union. But, as the UN Human Development Report shows, Ireland spends less on health and has fewer doctors per head of population than any other European nation. Even impoverished Azerbaijan does better.

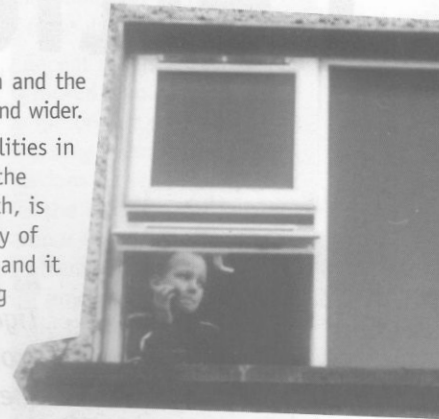
The Mortality study looked at almost half a million deaths in Ireland between 1989 and 1998, comparing cause of early death with social class. It found that for virtually every one of the sixty five recorded causes of death, poor people died in greater numbers and at an earlier age than rich people. Lung cancer, a major killer, dispatches poor people at four times the rate it takes the rich. Respiratory disease causes six times more deaths among the poor than the wealthy. Poor people are six times more likely to die in accidents than rich people. When it comes to death due to mental disorders, poor people die at sixteen times the rate of rich people.

Heart disease is by far the biggest killer on this island, accounting for 21,000 deaths every year. This disease, however, kills fewer than 90 out of every 100,000 at the top of the social ladder while at the bottom it's 280 per 100,000 — over three times the rate for the rich.

Stress is now recognised as a major factor contributing to heart disease, and research shows that a great deal of stress results from lack of employment security, no control over your job and a working environment you can't shape.

Ireland's 'economic success' was built on a job-creation strategy that depended entirely on attracting companies that offered short term contracts and, by and large, refused to recognise trade unions. In other words, it is official policy in this country to create the sort of jobs that can seriously damage your health.

And most significantly, new research shows that the health of those at the bottom is determined not so much by absolute poverty, but by the size of the gap between them and those at the top. So even though the poorest in Ireland may be slightly better off in absolute terms than say ten years ago, their health has been made worse as the gap between them and the richest continues to widen.



Farewell to the Celtic Tiger

*As the global economy appears to go into recession, the fragility of the Celtic Tiger has become all too clear. **Sinead Kennedy** analyses the factors behind the growing job losses and looks at how some workers have organised to fight them.*

In May of this year there was a 15% drop in industrial output in Ireland.

According to the Construction Federation Industry, construction firms, particularly in the Midlands, West and South, are experiencing a shortfall in orders.

Business travel is well down on last year while recruitment and marketing has generally been scaled back.

More than 240 Irish companies closed in the period between April and June 2001.

The Economist describes it as the first global recession of the 21st century.

Gateway, the flagship of the Celtic Tiger, announced the closure of its entire Irish operation in early August with the loss of almost one thousand jobs. The dynamic of the hi-tech industry, which employs 100,000 Irish workers, has altered considerably in the past number of months as firms face falling share prices and falling profits. Just last year the talk was of a shortage of skilled labour. This year the question on everyone's lips is: Which company is next? After Gateway, the answer came far too quickly with the announcement of the planned closure of General Semiconductors in Macroom, County Cork. Another 700 workers face the dole queue.

Few doubt the seriousness of the world recession and its impact on Ireland. Goodbody Stockbrokers technology analyst Gerry Hennigan said recently "Ongoing signs of a slowdown in corporate demand for IT beyond the US continue to provide evidence of a prolonged slowdown for the sector. The net effect is that the outlook now shows few signs of a potential upturn."

Explanations about why this has happened are few and far between. It suits the corporations and the government to present the slow-down as the result of the invisible hand of the market. Thus job losses become inevitable, the only response is to grin and bear it.

Yet what is happening in Ireland is part of a bigger picture of global capitalism; a system which, as Marx foresaw in its early days, is characterised by booms and slumps. He predicted that as capitalism extended across the world periodic crises would manifest themselves and intensify, with the booms becoming shallower and slumps deeper. This is what we see happening now.

In economic terms, the Celtic Tiger boom was shot through with inbuilt weaknesses. Because of its dependence on US investment (the US is

worth over \$8 billion to the Irish economy) and particularly on the hi-tech industry, it was always going to be very exposed to changes in the global economy. With America's growth rate at its lowest for almost ten years, the outlook is therefore poor.

The US is not alone in the problems it is experiencing. Other big economic players like Japan and Germany are also facing difficult times. Japan's GDP fell for a second consecutive quarter, while its industrial production plunged at an annual rate of 17% in the first six months of this year. German business confidence has fallen to its lowest for five years and the economy is stagnating.

Technically, a recession means that global growth rates are negative but by that definition, the world has not suffered a true global recession since the 1930s. The years of major recession, 1975, 1982 and 1991, all saw global GDP grow by 1.9%, 1.2% and 1.4% respectively. In the first six months of this year, global industrial production fell at a rate of 6%, the sharpest dive in two decades, and even the most optimistic forecasters are only predicting growth rates of between 1.4% and 1.8% for this year. More than 250,000 jobs have been lost in the global telecommunications industry in the last three months and the Financial Times has admitted that "the global situation is now much more serious than in 1999". Following the Asian and Financial crashes in 1998 and 1999, the American economy was able to keep the rest of the world buoyant but now that effect has come full circle and America is exporting its crisis around the world.

This is in part due to the American policy in the early nineties of investing heavily in foreign markets, such as Ireland. American imports now amount to 6% of the rest of the world's GDP, double their share in 1990. This means that if America catches a chill the rest



20% in the second quarter of last year to minus 10% this year.

So the vicious cycle begins. As *The Economist* put it recently "Those countries pushed into recession by weaker American demand will, in turn, buy less from both the United States and the rest of the world, magnifying the initial effect".

Even Alan Greenspan, the chairman of the Federal Reserve Board (the American central bank) warned that slowing national economies were dragging one another down. "The interaction of slowdown in a number of countries simultaneously has magnified the softening each of the individual countries would have experienced on its own." Greenspan nevertheless expressed confidence that the American economy was "experiencing only a pause" and that the boom would soon resume.

So far, consumer spending in the US and Ireland has held up well. But this may not continue. Many more job losses do seem inevitable. Firms like Gateway have been caught in the contradiction that capitalism continually throws up. At the height of the boom, companies pour money into increasing their productive capacity in the expectation that markets and profits will continue to grow. When they don't, firms are faced with the problem of having overproduced their product. With this threat to their profits, bosses cut back production and investment and close down factories. However, this only adds to the problem as the greater the number of workers that are thrown onto the dole, the less money there is available for spending. Far from being a finely tuned system as advocates of the market claim, capitalism is the economics of the madhouse.

We can only speculate at the moment as to how deep the crisis will be, but one thing is sure: the bosses will do their utmost to ensure that it is workers, and not their profits, that suffer. Hence, the warnings already from Bertie Ahern that pay "greed" must be avoided in the current climate.

However, there is an important legacy of the Celtic Tiger. Expectations were raised during Ireland's boom and a return to emigration, or even high levels of unemployment, will not be accepted. Massive numbers of women and new layers of younger workers, who have not experienced the defeats of the last recession, have been drawn into the workforce. The reappearance of strikes, of unofficial action and resistance to redundancies are signs that there will be a fightback. In such a climate, Mary Harney's attempts to point a finger at immigrant workers will find it more difficult to gain a resonance.

THE FIRST SIGNS OF RESISTANCE

As announcements of job losses come thick and fast, workers in two companies are resisting attempts to shut down the factories in which they work. In July, 60 workers at Peerless rugs in Athy were given two hours notice that the factory was about to close down.

With their right to a decent redundancy payment denied them, workers locked management and the receivers into the factory for nine hours, allowing them to leave only when guarantees were given that discussions on redundancy payments would begin the next day. Subsequent negotiations and a Labour Court hearing, which the company did not attend, have failed to deliver the payment of any money upfront. Workers voted to occupy the factory and will remain there until they get justice.

Likewise in Roscommon, striking SIPTU workers at Precision Castings blockaded the factory that their boss decided to shut rather than concede, or even discuss, a pay claim. Workers are maintaining a picket on the plant and are intent on continuing this battle.



This is exactly the response that any employer who attempts to throw his or her workers on the dole queue deserves. Employers have enjoyed record profits, boosted by miniscule tax rates, in Ireland's booming economy and should not be allowed to walk away with their wealth intact, while workers are left to count the cost.

The best defence we have is union organisation. The IT sector traditionally has had low levels of union membership, often because of non-union deals done at government level to attract firms to set up here. Unions have also done little to organise these workers but this needs to change. The union provides a mechanism through which workers can meet, make decisions and consider what action they can take. Without it, everyone is left more isolated and it is harder to organise a challenge to the employer's actions.

Every attempt by firms to shut up shop can be resisted. Workers in multinationals do have a lot of power. With jobs under threat world wide, a strike in one plant of a large multinational can very quickly gain a resonance amongst other workers facing the same uncertain future. By fighting back workers have little to lose and everything to gain.

Asylum Seekers: The Government Plays the Racist Card

Mary Harney and Noel Ahern both responded to the closure of Gateway saying that immigration controls may have to be tightened up. The attempt to blame the loss of jobs on immigrants, rather than on profit-hungry multinationals, is one of the oldest tricks in the book for our ruling classes. Over and over again, immigrants have proved a useful scapegoat whenever capitalism has gone into crisis. Melisa Halpin investigates.

It is no coincidence that the first signs of the Celtic Tiger turning to slump and the recent Supreme Court judgement on asylum have come at the same time. This ruling gives Justice Minister John O'Donoghue more power than ever to deport the 95% of asylum seekers he claims are "bogus". It means that the only "reason" that O'Donoghue has to give to deport someone is that their case for asylum has failed, which is tantamount to saying, "you can't have asylum because you can't have asylum". With this new free rein on deportations and the repatriation deal with Nigeria, bought with £8 million of Irish taxpayer's money, it is likely that O'Donoghue will step up deportations in September. Currently there are 500 Nigerians with deportation orders. The signs are that the government will attempt to deport each and every one of these over the next couple of months.

The success of the FF/PD deportation policy has relied heavily upon a number of myths put forward by the government and backed up by the media. It is important to scotch these myths. First of all, Ireland is host to a tiny number of the refugees that seek asylum internationally. Currently there are less than 30,000 asylum seekers in the country. Contrary to the government's "fear" these refugees have not come to sponge off the social welfare system. The ravages of free market capitalism creates refugees. The Structural Adjustment Programs of the International Monetary Fund have wreaked havoc on the Third World, forcing millions of people seeking food, shelter and employment out of their country of birth. The NATO war in the Balkans in 1999 created thousands of refugees who fled into "Fortress Europe". The hypocritical governments of Western Europe, who claimed the war was about saving the lives of Kosovars, treat these refugees like criminals and accuse them of scrounging. This accusation of scrounging is rampant across Europe and is even more

**let
asylum
seekers
stay**

disgusting when you see the reality of how asylum seekers live.

The majority of asylum seekers in Ireland live with the processes of "direct provision", mandatory dispersal and have no right to work. Only those who arrived before June 1999 can escape this process and have a limited right to work. Direct provision means that asylum seekers have to live in a hostel with meals at set times and often have a curfew in place. They receive £15 (£7.50 for a child) per week from the state. Dispersal means they can be sent to any corner of Ireland with no account taken of where friends or family may be living. Asylum seekers are subjected to fingerprinting on arrival in the country and if deemed ineligible for asylum can be put in prison while awaiting deportation.

The Government's policy of dehumanising and criminalising asylum seekers results in the racist attacks that immigrants experience every day on the streets. It also makes it easier for O'Donoghue to carry out his deportation policy because it legitimises the idea that asylum seekers are bogus.



These racist policies are set to get worse as the Irish boom moves towards recession. The labour shortage of the Celtic Tiger has been solved by the importation of workers, for example IT workers from India, unskilled workers from former Eastern Europe and nurses from the Philippines. These immigrant workers are also subjected to state racism. It is not the case that they come to Ireland and apply for a work permit and are then free to work and stay in Ireland. These workers are recruited by consultant companies, employed by Tanaiste Mary Harney, and are granted a job



Esther and Tamie - Their victory, a blow against racism

On his way to the UN Conference on racism at the end of August, John O'Donoghue stopped in to Nigeria to put the final touches to an agreement with the Nigerian government which will fast-track deportations of Nigerians seeking asylum here. The Nigerian government would not have revealed to him what happens to returned failed asylum seekers. O'Donoghue would have done well to listen to Nigerian asylum seekers here, most of whose claims our Minister for Justice apparently believes are bogus.

Esther, a Maths teacher, and her daughter Tamie are one such case that O'Donoghue dismissed. Esther and Tamie were living in Tallaght. Tamie was attending the local school and hoping to receive a hip operation that she badly needed. Esther had a job working in a big store in town. In her spare time, Esther helped out with the Saint Vincent dePaul local shop.

Their integration into Irish society — something that the 1999 Immigration Act requires to be taken into account when considering deportation — was ignored, if indeed the Dept of Justice ever bothered to find out. Equally, the reason why Esther fled to Ireland did not matter. In fact Esther had been abused by her husband for over twenty years and so she left him. Few rights exist for women in Nigeria. Recently, as Amnesty has pointed out, a woman who was raped by three men was sentenced to 80 lashes for her accusations. Esther would have been socially ostracised had she returned, and would have lived in fear of what her husband would do to her.

When questioned about why she had been refused, O'Donoghue failed to remember the case. His Department in August, however, had to climb down from their refusal and revoke the deportation of mother and daughter. Esther and Tamie have now been allowed to reapply for asylum.

A technical reason was given. Tamie's application should have been done separately and not as part of her mother's claim. If her deportation fell, through wrong procedures, Esther could not be deported either, as a minor could not be left here alone. As a result her deportation order was revoked as well. The real reason was that Esther and Tamie's case rallied a lot of support.

A demonstration organised by the Stop Deportations Campaign in July highlighted her case and a local meeting in Tallaght was organised. Friends and supporters went far and wide to publicise her case - she addressed meetings, she spoke on the radio and thousands of names were collected calling for her deportation to be lifted. It was because of this support, Esther believes, that their case was singled out and the deportation order revoked.

It is not guaranteed that she will get asylum now but the support that she has mustered shows how O'Donoghue's racist policies can be countered. Esther and Tamie were courageous in the way that they went public. Many asylum seekers are understandably frightened to show their faces. Esther and Tamie have shown that support for asylum seekers flies in the face of the government's racist clamour over asylum. The victory of their case shows how further deportations can be stopped.

**To contact the Stop Deportations Campaign
contact: stop.deportations@ireland.com**

permit i.e. they have a permit for a particular job. This permit will only last as long as the job and they are often dependent on their employers for their accommodation (provided very often at exorbitant rates). The results of this process have been seen in the case of Hannon's factory in Roscommon where the factory bosses were not only making a profit out of cheap labour costs but also from the rent they were charging their workers. The cost of their flights to Ireland was also deducted from their wages so in the case of one worker his pay cheque was £0.00 at the end of one week. A group of Filipino nurses were forced to live in the most degrading conditions while working in a fully unionised state job.

While immigration is relatively new to Ireland, the systematic discrimination against immigrant workers and asylum seekers is as old as capitalism itself. The dehumanising of black people in the U.S. in the 18th century was used to justify slavery. Irish people were scapegoated in Britain in the 19th century and it had the effect of dividing and weakening working class organisations. All through the 19th and 20th centuries ruling classes have used racism to justify colonialism and to benefit from cheap labour.

The post-war boom in Britain necessitated the wholesale importation of workers from Commonwealth countries. As that boom turned to slump, people like Tory MP Enoch Powell came to prominence demanding repatriation, and in the 1970s the Tories were able to come to power by playing the race card. Almost inevitably it resulted in the rise of support for the fascist National Front who offered more immediate 'action' on the race issue. This is exactly what we are seeing in Britain today. The horrific racist murder of a young Kurd in the deprived estate of Sighthill in Glasgow is the direct result of New Labour's racist policies and the vicious playing of the race card in the general election by both the Tories and New Labour. These policies, if they are not opposed, will allow the fascist British National Party (BNP) to get a hearing again.

Ahern and Harney are laying the ground for the exact same situation here. The comments on the closure of Gateway are a concerted attempt to get people to blame asylum seekers for any future job losses. While the institutionalised racism of this government has got a hearing in Ireland, it has also produced nearly a hundred different pro-refugee and anti-racist groups. The anger at the increasingly exposed corrupt golden circle of government and big business that runs the country, has made it much more difficult for racist ideas to get a hold. In the coming months black and white need to stand together to challenge all deportations and factory closures. The blame needs to be placed fairly and squarely on Fianna Fail and the PDs who want to look after the profits of multi-nationals and their big business friends at the expense of the whole of the working class. As the slogan chanted by 60,000 people marching for immigrant rights at the anti capitalist protests in Genoa put it: Unemployment and inflation are not caused by immigration, Bullshit! Come off it! The enemy is profit!

OPEN TO DEBATE

The End of the Road for "Progressive" Unionism

The PUP returns to its sectarian roots. Sean McVeigh explains why.

At one time, the PUP was seen as left-wing and even Sinn Féin were not averse to doing business with them. In October 1994, following the Loyalist ceasefire, David Irvine and Billy Hutchinson denounced the "unionist fur coat brigade" for using sectarianism to impose poverty on Protestants and Catholics. Some even hailed Irvine and Hutchinson as a working class answer to reactionary unionism. In the same vein, a recent history of the UVF, by McDonald and Cusack, describes the PUP as an "avowedly socialist party".

Even if their actual support was always small, their talk seemed to show that socialist politics could emerge within the sectarian divide. However, recent events have shown that the PUP has resumed its original tune. It remains resolutely wedded to traditional loyalism and all of its ugly manifestations.

The PUP was the first party to walk away from the Weston Park talks, saying they were "going nowhere" and that they were "sick of concession after concession to Sinn Féin". This is the standard anti-agreement unionist position and can only have encouraged Jeffrey Donaldson and David Burnside, who walked away from the talks shortly afterwards. In August, Irvine declared "the process for us is all but over".

During the British General Election of this year, Hutchinson pulled out of the tightly fought contest in North Belfast so as not to divide the unionist vote. Keeping 'the other side' out of the seat was obviously more important than challenging the unionist "fur coat brigade" in the election. Again in North Belfast, the PUP ducked the issue of a bigoted loyalist blockade of a Catholic primary school by saying the "republicans were playing the game of victimhood". Last year weapons were found in the PUP's offices in Ballymoney. The PUP could only say that it had "no excuse".

Anyone who even glances at the UVF magazine *'Combat'* (which carries the press statements of the PUP, reports of PUP conferences, PUP election manifestos and articles by Irvine and Hutchinson) will be left in no doubt that the PUP is far from breaking with traditional loyalism and continues to associate with the worst forms of sectarian bigotry. Articles in this magazine glorify sectarian killers and support the Orange Order's attempt to march down the Garvaghy Road. The July 2001 issue carries an article that refers to people living in the Catholic Short Strand area of Belfast as "beasts", "animals", and living in "rat holes". The same article refers to the growing Catholic population of North Belfast; "the Antrim Road has been lost to Republicanism, could it be now that the same fate is planned for Glengormley?"

These are the same racist ideas that inspired the UVF murder campaign against Catholics for 25 years. They are the same ideas that inspired the UVF to kill Gavin Brett in Glengormley in July, and a loyalist gang to kick to death Trevor Lowry in March, again in Glengormley.

We have been here before. McDonald and Cusack's book looks at the Volunteer Political Party, the UVF's political wing in

the 1970s. It attacked the unionist "fur coat brigade", called for an end to poverty and sectarianism and was branded as "communist" by other unionist parties. Meanwhile, its military wing continued its sectarian murder campaign.

The reality is that the PUP is a bundle of contradictions. Like reformist parties it reflects all the ideas inside the working class, both the worst forms of sectarian bigotry as well as the desire of most Protestant workers for a better life, free from poverty, violence and sectarianism. Given that nobody seems to speak for them as workers, it is not surprising that some Protestants looked to them as sounding different.

But their attachment to unionism stands in the way of them taking up issues that affect workers. Irvine and Hutchinson have been vocal in their opposition to the 11+ in the North's schools, but during the 11+ debate they held a protest at the Department of Education, not against the 11+ but against Martin McGuinness for not flying the Union Jack over the Department of Education. This type of activity by the PUP only serves to channel people's anger at the system into sectarian politics. It also means that William McCaughey, the PUP Chairperson in Ballymena, will pen articles for *Combat* magazine urging the town council "to become pro-active in cross-community work and in the promotion of anti-sectarianism in the Ballymena area". This is pure hypocrisy. McCaughey has been to the forefront in promoting sectarianism. He is an ex-RUC man, convicted killer and organiser of the picket at the Harryville Catholic Church in Ballymena.

This hypocrisy has prevented the PUP from growing. In the June general election the PUP got only 0.6 % of the vote, standing in only two constituencies where its vote fell by 30% and by 50%. Developments since the ceasefires have shown that the PUP has not broken from sectarianism and so is incapable of fighting poverty and attacks on public services.

The PUP's about-turn shows how progressive politics can only go so far within the confines of unionism. It is doomed, when the chips are down, to put creed before class and so feeds into despair. This is what we see happening now. It offers nothing to ordinary Protestants except a return to the vicious sectarianism that we have seen in North Belfast.

Truly anti-sectarian and progressive politics has to challenge sectarian unionism. That includes taking on the difficult issues around sectarianism, like the divisiveness of Orange marches and the sectarian nature of the police force. Many ordinary Protestants vote with their feet around the marching season and go away for the week.

Progressive politics cannot grow within sectarian boundaries. It can only come from a proven record of fighting the rotten conditions of run-down services, job losses and poverty that affect working-class Protestants and Catholics alike.

The business of waste

Ireland is facing a waste crisis. Campaigners are vociferously opposing the building of incinerators and new super dumps. *Donal McFhearraigh* investigates their concerns and challenges the whole agenda behind the government's waste management policy.

Planning permission has recently been granted for the construction of an incinerator in Duleek County Meath, despite the fears of local residents who may now lodge an appeal. Their fears are well founded. According to a British government report published in September 2000, every incinerator in Britain causes, on average, seven deaths and the hospitalisation of fourteen people each year.

Incinerators are also a major cause of respiratory illnesses and produce cancer-causing dioxins. Dioxin is the most toxic synthetic substance known to humankind. The only safe level of exposure to dioxins is zero. Low-level exposures to dioxins are known to interfere with the immune system, the reproductive system, the endocrine system, and cause foetal abnormalities.

In November 2000, an EU directive condemned incineration saying it is not a valid recycling method, even with energy recovery from burning. Incineration contributes to atmospheric change, which is directly linked to global warming. The toxic ash from incinerators still has to go to landfill and occupies 40-50% of the space that compacted unburnt waste would. Ash is also far more liable to pollute water sources through seeping into the water table.

Landfill sites are the other main plank of government policy. Concerns about them have existed for many years and just last August, a study in the British Medical Journal reported that people who live within two kilometres of landfills may have a slightly above average rate of birth defects.

With just 8% of Irish waste currently being recycled, recycling hardly figures at all in the government's approach. Yet it is safe and environmentally friendly. Far more energy is saved by recycling instead of burning materials. To reuse and recycle would recover up to 90% of a material's energy compared to 25% recovery from incineration.

What is efficient and beneficial however is far from the reality of waste disposal in Ireland. Solving the waste management crisis would require a major policy change on the part of the government. Therein lies the problem. Fianna Fail is trying to develop a new highly profitable waste industry. As Noel Dempsey, Minister for the Environment, said "There is considerable scope for increased participation by the private sector in all areas of waste management in Ireland, and authorities should encourage and facilitate business involvement in the provision of waste management services". There are huge profits to be made, between IRE7.5 million and IRE8 million per annum, from energy produced by each incinerator.

Incineration obviously requires waste, so not surprisingly the government has taken few steps to reduce the levels of waste production. In 1998, the packaging content of household waste was estimated to be 26.3% but the option of buying a product without its packaging just does not exist.



Are wheelie bins and privatisation the answer to the waste problem?

It is not the consumer, however, who produces the bulk of waste. According to the most recent government figures over 40 million tonnes of waste are from agriculture, 37 million tonnes are from industry and only 2 million tonnes are from domestic waste. Big agriculture and big business are therefore the main polluters yet these are the very people who get most subsidies and tax breaks from the government. Corporation tax, for example, will soon be reduced to 12.5%. On the other hand, consumers face the imposition of bin charges, the unfair double tax that applies the 'polluter pays' principle in a biased and completely inequitable way. Rather than playing a constructive role in waste reduction, bin charges are merely a stepping stone to privatisation of the bin collection service, which in turn means higher collection charges.

Opposition does exist at many levels to the government's waste management agenda. But an indication of how desperately they want to implement it has been revealed by the actions of the Environment Minister. Councillors, because of massive resistance in their communities, have in some cases refused to push through the government's plans. Dempsey's response was firstly to threaten to dissolve any council that didn't back the local manager's waste management plan, as happened in the case of Dublin Corporation. He then introduced new legislation which places all power to decide waste management strategy in the hands of the unelected county manager. The plan cannot be changed in the first four years without the manager's consent, while councillors are prohibited from restricting the implementation of the plan. In other words democracy will be bypassed to enable Fianna Fail and the PDs to look after the interests of their friends in business and to once again attack both the environment and worker's wage packets.

The solution to the waste crisis lies in a programme to eliminate waste at source, investment in a public recycling scheme and taxing the big polluters. However, the government at present is not interested in sustainable systems only profitable ones. Tied into a neo-liberal agenda of privatisation, waste is just another area that they want to hand over to the private sector. Considering its public health and environmental implications, waste management is definitely a service that should not be sold

Israel and Palestine: The year of intifada

The current escalation of the conflict between Palestine and Israel has many commentators searching for explanations. **Richard Boyd Barret** examines the roots of the problem.

More than seven hundred people have been killed since the latest phase of the conflict between the Palestinians and the state of Israel began late last year. Each side blames the other and claims *they* are committed to peace. The media coverage suggests that both sides are equally to blame. The western powers, and especially the United States, are presented as the honest brokers trying to end the cycle of violence. Yet the real story of the conflict is very different.

The Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) are among the best equipped in the world. They possess the most advanced US military technology: everything from tanks, artillery and helicopter gunships to missile systems. Palestinian protesters, many of them teenagers with stones and occasionally the odd light weapon, face this mighty force. Three quarters of those killed over the last ten months have been Palestinians, many of them young children. The military imbalance is itself a reflection of the much deeper imbalance between the two sides.

Israel is a state which enjoys a Western standard of living. It is the single biggest recipient of US military and financial aid. Meanwhile, Christian Aid and Save the Children estimate that 64% of the Palestinian population live below the poverty line. Tens of thousands of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza live in crowded refugee camps without running water and basic sewage and sanitation.

The huge inequalities in wealth between Israeli and Palestinian are the product of the systematic oppression of Palestinians by the Israelis that dates back to the foundation of the Israeli State in 1947. The year 1947 is referred to by Palestinians as 'Nekbah', the catastrophe. One million Palestinians were driven from their homes by Zionist terror gangs. The small village of Deir Yassein was raided by Zionist militia and 250 villagers were killed in their beds. The screams of the victims were recorded and played aloud in surrounding Palestinian villages in order to

terrorise the population into fleeing their homes. The expelled Palestinians were driven onto the hill-sides of the West Bank, then part of Jordan, and the small enclave of Gaza which was controlled

by Egypt. Many were forced to live in the open until the UN built refugee camps a couple of years later.

In 1967, following the war between Israel and the neighbouring Arab regimes, Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza and retained control of these areas until recently. Under Israeli rule, Palestinians were subjected to a system of discrimination identical to that endured by blacks in apartheid South Africa. Central to this oppression was the Israeli 'law of return'. This law, which underpinned the Israeli State from its foundation, allows Jews from anywhere in the world to claim citizenship, a home and a job in Israel. Yet Palestinians, whose families have lived in the region for generations, are denied the right to return to their homes. They require special passes just to enter Israel. They are only employed in the most menial jobs and suffer institutionalised wage discrimination from the Israeli state.

Since 1967, the UN has passed resolutions condemning the Israeli occupation of Gaza and the West Bank as illegal. However for the Zionist leaders of Israel, the West Bank and Gaza represented a key part of their plans to expand their state and form 'Yearetz' (Greater) Israel. Israel has encouraged hundreds of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories. Many of them are stationed on the West Bank's border with Jordan, forming a new Israeli frontier.

But Israeli brutality has not been limited to the



base in Beirut, from Lebanon. Sharon collaborated with the far-right Christian Phalange (fascists). Israeli soldiers observed while the Phalange massacred thousands of Palestinian civilians in the refugee camps of Sabra and Shatilla.

The West has always turned a blind eye to Israeli injustice. The US supports Israel as a key ally in the oil rich region of the Middle East. US interests, and especially those of its oil companies, depend on Israel to slap down any Arab regime that threatens Western dominance over the world's biggest supply of oil.

Despite the appalling persecution of the Palestinians, they themselves have continually resisted Israeli aggression. For years, Yasser Arafat's PLO led a guerilla struggle against Israel. But Arafat's paramilitary forces were never going to be a match for the armed might of Israel. By the mid-eighties the PLO had all but given up on their struggle. The much vaunted peace process, now on the verge of collapse, arose not from an Israeli change of heart or even from the PLO, but from the explosion of a massive Palestinian uprising across the occupied territories in late 1987 — Intifada.

Israel has always tried to claim that the Intifada was orchestrated by Arafat and the PLO. This lie is repeated today as Sharon blames Arafat for continued Palestinian resistance. The Intifada was, however, a spontaneous uprising of young people in the camps and towns of the territories. It was an expression of protest and rage against the Israeli military presence and the daily diet of degradation and humiliation suffered by Palestinians. As always, Israel responded with brute force, shooting down unarmed protesters and civilians. But the Intifada continued.

The uprising inspired a massive wave of solidarity across the Middle East that began to threaten the stability of the whole region. Corrupt Arab regimes, in the pockets of the West, feared pro-Palestinian protests might spill over into challenges to their own states. The US-led bombing of Iraq further incensed the Arab masses.

The Oslo peace process was a desperate attempt at containment, with even sections of the Israeli establishment acknowledging that concessions would have to be made to the Palestinians for fear that things would get out of control in the region. Arafat and the PLO, anxious that they would be overtaken by more radical forces in the Palestinian population, were happy to go along with a deal. But the package hammered out in Oslo that led to the famous handshake between Arafat and Yitzak Rabin on the White House lawn, was never going to address the grievances of Palestinians.

The Palestinians were given autonomy in Gaza and a few enclaves around major Arab towns. A promise was made to freeze settlements on the territories. Israel would retain control of borders and responsibility for defence. Contentious issues like the fate of Jerusalem were put on the long finger. The right of Palestinian



The Intifada needs to move from being a struggle against national oppression to becoming a struggle that embraces the whole of the region

the territories.

Deliberately provocative developments were undertaken in the Arab half of East Jerusalem, indicating that Israel was not going to agree to joint sovereignty of the city that both sides claimed as their capital.

The election of Ariel Sharon as the new Prime Minister of Israel was the final straw for Palestinians. Sharon was on the extreme right of Zionism with a brutal history of aggression towards the Palestinians. His visit to the Muslim Temple Mount in East Jerusalem was designed to enrage Palestinians and derail the peace process. As Palestinians took to the streets to protest, Israel reacted with violence. The last ten months have seen a systematic shoot to kill policy by the Israeli army against Palestinian protesters and civilians.

Inevitably this increased support for militant Islamic groups like Hamas. The suicide bomb attacks by these groups are appalling. But the question to ask is what terrible oppression and sense of helplessness can cause a young man to voluntarily blow himself and others to pieces. The answer lies in the relentless violence and persecution meted out by Israel against the entire Palestinian population.

The only just solution is to establish a democratic secular state on the whole territory of Palestine, where Jew and Arab can live side by side as equal citizens. Such a solution is unlikely to come from inside Israel itself. Even among those Israelis who are horrified by Israel's treatment of the Palestinians and who support land for peace deals, there are very few who accept the need to dismantle the Jewish state altogether. But, as the Israeli state in any form can only exist by denying Palestinians the 'right to return' and live as equals in what is now Israel, no lasting peace can ever be built on this basis.

So what can the Palestinians do? Intifada is the key, but the mass resistance must spread across the Middle East and challenge the corrupt regimes throughout the region. The Arab rulers of Jordan, Syria, Saudi-Arabia and Egypt pay lip service to the Palestinian struggle but fear that mass revolt might spill over into a challenge to their own power. While the US is the major power, the Arab rulers also form a part of the machinery of exploitation that milks the Middle East of oil profits at the expense of the Arab working class.

The Intifada needs to move from being a struggle against national oppression to becoming a struggle

Empire:

How do we strike back?

"*Empire*", a 500-page tome by an Italian philosopher-activist, Antoni Negri, and a previously unheard of American academic, Michael Hardt, has sold out in North America. Its popularity is a sign of the growing size of the anti-capitalist movement and the thirst for ideas around it. **Marnie Holborow** investigates what it says.

Toni Negri has been a long-time voice of the Italian left. In the seventies, as part of the clamp-down by the Italian state on the far left, he was accused of "armed insurrection against the state". He was sentenced to thirty years imprisonment which, after a spell of exile in France, he is still serving. Negri is most identified with the autonomous movement in Italy, which in the seventies was very influential. Many of those identified today with the Tute Bianche – the so-called white bloc – draw inspiration from Negri.

Hardt and Negri see "*Empire*" as a contribution "not against the post-Seattle movement but within it" and their invitation to debate the issues needs to be taken seriously.

"*Empire*" has some strengths. Hardt and Negri are thoroughgoing internationalists. They describe how modern day capitalism has broken down distinctions between the First and Third World. As they explain: "In Latin America or Southeast Asia all levels of production exist simultaneously and side by side from the highest levels of technology, productivity and accumulation, to the lowest. In the metropolises, too, labour spans the continuum from the heights to the depths of capitalist production: the sweatshops of New York and Paris can rival those of Hong Kong and Manila". Along the lines of what socialists have described as combined and uneven development in capitalism, they show how high-tech industry operates alongside nineteenth-century labour intensive industry. But while capitalism has sucked masses of people into production across boundaries and across the world, the other side of globalisation is that those that it exploits have a "greater potential for communality among each other".

Secondly, Hardt and Negri are optimistic about changing things. They claim back the revolutionary traditions of the past, the Spanish civil war and anti-fascism, and hold up the militants of the Wobblies (the Industrial Workers of the World of the early 1900s in the US) as their model. They say that resistance and liberation are on the agenda because the system itself is vulnerable. In what Hardt and Negri describe as the "global multitude", everyone from the poor slum dwellers of Sao Paulo to multinational computer workers have a reason to be part of the revolt against Empire. The global economy far from being all-powerful has created a political climate, which has never been more favourable for uprising by "communism which is



places them squarely alongside those who are opposed to the system and fighting for change.

Whether *Empire* provides us with the tools for change, however, is less certain. Their very notion of Empire is elusive. They talk of the "universal rule of capital without a centre". Their main thesis rests on the belief that in the "postmodern global economy", power can no longer be adjudged to centre on the US or control to rest simply with the IMF, World Bank or corporations. Nation states have become redundant and imperialism, in the traditional Marxist sense, has been transcended. Instead Empire is conceived as "a smooth place...both everywhere and nowhere". This is a very abstract concept that results in a failure by Negri and Hardt to provide a clear analysis of who rules and how.

This view of power is rooted in postmodernism, prominent in the 1980s and early 90s. While Hardt and Negri mention Marx, they also pay tribute to Deleuze. Deleuze was one of the gurus of French postmodernism who believed that there was no objective reality only "differences". It is from Deleuze that Hardt and Negri adopt the term "biopower". They define it as "a form of power that regulates social life from the interior". The new social order operates by exercising effective command over the entire life of people. The "regulation of culture" and the "management of communication" are key to the all-encompassing power of Empire.

Postmodernism was a retreat from politics in the real world. The relegating of power in Empire into this

leads to vague and zany conclusions. Because the rule of capital no longer has a centre, "there is no longer a Winter Palace" (the building that Russian workers stormed in 1917 in one of the defining moments of the Russian revolution), against which to focus a fight.

As a result, in the final chapter after a call for global citizenship and the right to reappropriation, an appeal is made for a kind of moral communism. They talk of "biopolitical self-organisation" which involves a return to the rejection of capitalism exemplified by St. Francis of Assisi. "In postmodernity", we are told, "we find ourselves in Francis's situation posing against the misery of power the joy of being". Empire finishes on this moral clarion call: "This revolution that no power will control because biopower and communism, cooperation and revolution remain together in love, simplicity and also innocence. This is the irrepressible lightness and joy of being communist".

This is not the first time that radicals have appealed to moral force. During one of the first international movements against capitalism in the mid-nineteenth century, the utopian socialists called for socialist havens where human passions of good and right would determine the way people lived. Charles Fourier, a French utopian socialist, even declared that in such a society the sea would turn to lemonade to suit the purposes of these new joyful people. These early socialists did not have a material understanding of the new capitalist system and so resorted to a subjective appeal to the moral good. For Hardt and Negri, vagueness about where the Empire's power comes from makes them see change as a leap of faith rather than the interplay of social forces. This is why Negri puts the emphasis on selective shock tactics and advocates "white bloc" stunts. Individual actions are seen as having more effect than collective power.



class struggle in Italy and the state moving to repress the movement, Negri came to the conclusion that the working class was no longer an agent of social revolution. Out of frustration with the deadlock of workers' struggles, he redefined the working class into a broader pool that included anyone who was oppressed by "social capital" — what he now called "social workers". Negri argued that the crisis of the system was such that a spontaneous upsurge would be enough to topple it. "Mass violence" would play a key role in this and almost any social element could act as the detonator. He rejected the working class as an agent of change in favour of the spontaneous revolt of "other social protagonists", who reappear in *Empire* as "the multitude".

It was flawed then and is flawed now. The turn away from the working class in the seventies led to disaster. As the Italian state sought to repress the workers' movements,

new social movements proved incapable of challenging the forces of the state and the restructuring of capitalism. On the contrary, many in these movements became a new niche market for capitalism, repackaged as lifestyle consumerism, as Naomi Klein has pointed out.

Hardt and Negri's rejection of the working class as the agent of change skirts around the central dynamic of capitalism. They argue that production itself is no longer at the core of capitalism — instead it is the "reproduction of social life" in a "biopolitical context" in which "immaterial labour" has become more important than productive labour. However, the central driving force of global capitalism remains the accumulation of surplus value, with the vast bulk of it coming from the exploitation of wage labour. This fact does not mean that non-productive labour does not play an important role. It always has. Capitalism in the nineteenth century spawned large numbers of service workers, domestic servants then being the largest section of the British working class. The fact that service industries — communications and technology, health, education, social services — make up a large section of the workforce today does not point to a new non-productive system but instead to the complexities of the productive system itself. The more specialised global capitalism becomes, the more skills, education, technology and communications are required.

The massive service industries employing millions of highly skilled people cannot be understood except as serving a back-up function for capitalist production as a whole. What is new is not that the economy has become post-industrial, but that massive numbers of new people become part of an ever-larger working class encompassing people with all sorts of sophisticated skills.

This is not just some abstract economic point but one that has political effects. It means that no other social group

This class is also bigger and more embracing than ever. Resistance to the effects of capitalism involves groups and individuals from all sorts of backgrounds, but if it is to move beyond protests and demonstrations it must have workers' self activity — occupations of workplaces, stoppages and general strike — at its centre. No band of imaginative protesters or fighters in the front line — whether Tute Bianche or guerrilla groups — can substitute for the power that workers have.

Class, whether from the point of view of those who rule the system or those who are subjected to it, is a key concept that cannot be ignored. Any attempt to do so robs us of the means of changing it. Hardt and Negri would do well to recall what was said by Polish revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg, "Where the chains of capitalism are forged, there they must be broken". Only then can a strike-back against the power of global capitalism be effective.

REVIEWS - ARTS

Film

LETTING THE DEAD HAVE THEIR SAY *Injustice*



Brian Douglas, murdered by the British police.

On 16th December 1994 Oluwashiji Lapite died from asphyxia in Stoke Newington police station in North East London. Strangle marks on his necks were found. He had been picked up for 'acting suspiciously'. At the inquest, police officers admitted kicking and biting him. No charges were brought. Lapite's death was the spark for *Injustice*, a new film by director Tariq Mehmood.

'Our primary purpose for starting work on the film was our disgust at the fact that police officers were literally getting away with murder. Many of the most violent killings were of black people' says Mehmood. The list of such killings is long - Joy Gardiner, Brian Douglas Ibrahim Sey and the thousand or so others that have died in police custody in England and Wales. *Injustice* records the events in the lives of the families and campaigns of these victims of British justice. The interviews form the bedrock of the film's narrative.

Mehmood explains 'A station such as Stoke Newington, popularly known as Cokey Stokey - a reference to police involvement in drugs and corruption - has been responsible for five deaths. This is the extent of racism in the Met. It is also the extent of the everyday violence that they dish out to people, both black and white, who are just going about their daily business'.

Police officers involved in the deaths have issued threats of legal action to venues scheduled to show the film. Officers have even turned up at screenings and banged on the doors to stop *Injustice* being shown. The police threats have ensured the film was not screened in two venues in London and in Manchester.

Some of these family members and supporters barricaded themselves into Conway Hall in London last month to force *Injustice* to be shown. Around three hundred people turned out to watch a screening of *Injustice* in Tottenham, North London.

Brian Douglas was one of those murdered by police whose case is examined by the film. "I just want peace and justice," pleads Mrs Douglas his mother. Brian was a 33 year old black man from South London. He was the first victim to die in Britain from the police using the new US-style long-handled baton. Brian and his friend were stopped by police at St Luke's Avenue in Clapham, South London. During the inquest the two officers admitted hitting Brian three times. Brian suffered a fractured skull.

He collapsed there and fell into a coma. The police held Brian at the police station for 15 hours before he was given any medical attention. He was taken to St Thomas's Hospital and five days later was pronounced dead from "massive" brain damage and seven skull fractures. The inquest verdict concluded "death by misadventure". Brian's family was denied access to his body for two months after his death. His sister, Brenda Weinberg, asks, "How many more victims? How many more people will die?" No police officer has faced disciplinary action or prosecution for the death of Brian Douglas.

When *Injustice* was shown in Jamaica, with Brian's mother as guest of honour, a woman said that it would inspire them in their own struggles in Jamaica. As the director says 'The central aim of our film is to create a feeling of hope not hopelessness'. As racism is fanned by our government and as gardai show their racism on entry points in Ireland, this film should receive the same response when it is shown in Ireland.

Catherine Boothman

Migrant Media's website is at <http://webgate.poptel.org.uk/migrantmedia/>

For information on the fight against fascism check out the Anti-Nazi League's website at www.anl.org.uk

Christy Moore is a familiar face on demonstrations and has sung and written great songs, recording many of the social struggles of the last three decades. Whether berating Fianna Fail's cover up of the Stardust disaster or the CIA's destruction of the Nicaraguan revolution, his art has always been driven by the desire to ensure that the victims are not forgotten nor the temporary victors forgiven.

He takes music and songs inherited from the struggles of the past and breathes new artistic fire into them, inspiring those who are trying to change the world today and who need something to tap their feet to while they are at it.

In *This Is The Day* - the follow up to the disappointing *Traveller* - Moore returns to roots and to form. It is clear from the spirit of songs like 'How Long' that he shares some of the concerns and urgency of anti-capitalism:

*How long can you hear someone crying
How long can you hear someone dying
Before you ask your self why
How long will we hear people speaking
About missiles for peace and just let it go by
How long will they tell us
these weapons are keeping us free
It's a lie.*

The tribute song 'Victor Jara' resurrects the Chilean folk singer who was murdered by Pinochet. 'Companeros', an old Ewan MacColl ballad, eulogises the Cuban revolution. Love and loss songs like 'So Do I' and the exquisite 'Cry Like a Man' remind us that

what we ultimately fight for is the freedom to feel. And no Christy Moore album is complete without the foot-tapping nonsense-rhymers you can't get out of your head like 'Johnny Don't Go'.

Moore is backed on the album by long time collaborators Donal Lunney and Declan Sinnott who show off their skills with instruments as diverse as the Bouzouki and Hidebojangle.

In the nineteen eighties albums like *'Ride On'* lingered with a poignant beauty in the tragic, twilight space of defeat and reflected on the hard lessons learned by ordinary men and women.

In 1972's *Prosperous*, Moore crossed swords with the likes of Guthrie, Dylan and James Connolly and sparks flew in all directions. To listen to that album is to know what it felt like to be young and dreaming in a time when social movements were winning great victories and the individual was reaching for the liberating touch of others after the solitude imposed by decades of oppression.

In 2001 the tide is turning once again in our direction. Like many lefties of his generation, Moore has not quite grasped this and so the album is still a little infused with the weary but sincere pessimism of the eighties and nineties.

Even with this qualification, *This is the Day* remains a musically and lyrically accomplished collection of well crafted and beautifully interpreted songs in which Moore nails his colours firmly to the mast and once again puts his shoulder behind the wheel of change.

Music

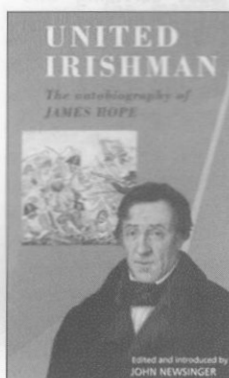
This is the day
Christy Moore
Columbia
£17.99



HOPE AMIDST THE HORROR

**United
Irishman**
The auto-
biography of
James Hope

Edited and
introduced by
John Newsinger
Merlin Press,
£9.99



The defeat of the United Irishmen's rebellion of 1798 still echoes through Irish politics. The Orange Order, which emerged as a reactionary counterweight to the great united movement against British rule, still clings to the celebration of the defeat of the rising. In 1998, loyalist protesters at Drumcree held up a banner saying 'Croppies Lie Down'. Croppie was a term for the United Irishmen. Sinn Féin, the SDLP and Fianna Fáil pay ritual homage to the memory of Wolfe Tone, the Protestant founder of Irish republicanism, while taking for granted that Northern Protestants will always form a united 'unionist community'.

That is why it is great to have a new edition of the autobiography of James 'Jemmy' Hope. Hope was a Protestant weaver from Templepatrick, and a key figure in the organising of the United Irishmen throughout Ireland. Forty years later, after many years spent on the run and living in poverty in Belfast, Hope dictated this short but compelling account of his life.

It is remarkable, not only for the inspiring first hand account of how the United Irishmen movement grew, but also for a keen analysis of the class divisions within the movement and the effect this had on the outcome of the rebellion. Hope describes how, in the early 1790s, the class divisions in Irish society were so immense that "mankind seemed divided into different species, each preying on the other". The French Revolution of 1789 and the American War of Independence inspired people in Ireland to fight for a society of equality and liberty. In 1791 they marched in Belfast to celebrate the anniversary of the French revolution, with a banner saying 'Our Gallic brother was born on July 14 1789, alas we are still in embryo - The Irish Bastille, let us unite to destroy it'.

In the space of a few years, the United Irishmen became a mass popular movement, preaching the unity of Catholic and Protestant against the injustice of British rule. Its newspaper, the Northern Star, was read by tens of thousands. Hope travelled all over Ireland to organise branches of the secret society and to prepare for a rising. He describes the

dramatic effect the United Irishmen had on displacing sectarian conflict in Ulster. "The influence of the union [United Irishmen] soon began to be felt at all public places, ... extending to all the counties of Ulster. The 'Break-of-day' boys [Protestant] and 'Defenders' [Catholics] lamented their past indiscretions on both sides, and tracing them to their legitimate source, resolved to avoid the causes which led to them. In short, for a little time, Ulster seemed one united family, the members of which lived together in harmony and peace."

Many of the leaders of the movement, like McCracken, were businessmen and traders, who were excluded from any say in society by the dominant land-owning ascendancy. But the real impetus for the movement came from below, from the masses of workers in the towns, craftsmen and small farmers. Hope argues, "It is my settled opinion that the condition of the labouring class was the fundamental question at issue between the rulers and the people and there could be no solid foundation for liberty, till measures were adopted that went to the root of the evil".

The scale of the movement terrified the British, who used increasingly brutal methods to suppress them. But it also worried many of its middle-class supporters, who feared that a rebellion might also threaten their wealth. Hope details their influence on the movement and, in particular, how they placed their hopes in a French invasion and repeatedly delayed the preparation of a mass uprising. Hope, along with McCracken, pushed aside the hesitant leadership in Belfast and took part in the battle of Antrim. But the disarray of the leadership meant the rising was not coordinated. The British military isolated each area and brutally suppressed the movement, executing its leaders. Hope was keen to draw the lessons of its defeat.

"The conduct of public men, of popular men, in those times convinced me that so long as men of rank and fortune lead a people, they will modify abuses, reform to a certain extent, but they will never remove any real grievances that press down on the people."

This book is an encyclopædia of the anti-capitalist movement and is sure to become a standard reference. *Anti-Capitalism: a Guide to the Movement* is divided into readable and accessible sections packed with facts and figures. The broad range of topics covered and the plurality of contributors reflects the very nature of the movement it is trying to describe. Many of the foremost thinkers in the movement are represented. Susan George, author of *The Debt Boomerang* and a leading activist in ATTAC, writes on Corporate Globalisation. Barry Coates, of the World Development Movement, writes on GATS and Kevin Watkins of OXFAM writes on Pharmaceutical Patents. Well known authors and activists such as George Monbiot, Roger Burbach, Lindsey German and Alex Callinicos all contribute as do a host of other activists, trade unionists, authors and journalists.

The book is neatly structured. Issues related to the movement are explored in impressive detail. These range from the environment and the threat posed by GM foods to war and immigration. They are all damning in their indictment of the neo-liberal economic agenda that institutions such as the World Bank are seeking to impose across the planet. The articles are meticulously researched and provide valuable ammunition for any

anti-capitalist. The internationalist element of the book shines through as well.

An entire section is devoted to analysing every region of the world in terms of the circumstances people find themselves in and their struggles against neo-liberalism. The sections on the "majority" (or developing) world are especially informative and inspiring. Many struggles against capitalism take place in the majority world often involving millions of people taking great risks under dictatorial conditions, and often winning great victories. The near insurrection in Ecuador in January 2000 is a case in point. A general strike combined with a march in the capital Quito by the country's indigenous peoples to beat back the government's IMF inspired cut-backs programme.

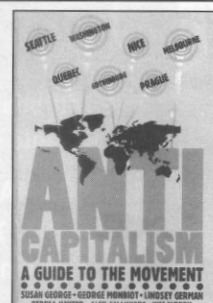
There is an excellent directory complete with website addresses of organisations that have been to the fore in the anti-capitalist movement, from Act-Up to the Zapatistas. Other sections attempt to define the roles of unions, of students, of anarchists and of socialists within the movement.

The chapter on anarchists by Michael Albert, a journalist who writes for the libertarian journal *Z*

Anti- Capitalism: A Guide to the Movement.

John Charlton and
Emma Bircham
(eds)

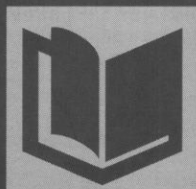
Bookmarks
£12.50



selves anarchist have often distinguished themselves as the most puritanical and divisive part of the anti-capitalist movement, in stark contrast to their rhetorical posturing. Albert, a leading American anarchist throws down the gauntlet to the sectarians who share his basic beliefs, challenging them to engage in a positive and constructive manner with the rest of the movement. Smaller sections deal with the role and history of the WTO, IMF and World Bank, as well as exploring the exploits of companies as unpleasant as McDonalds, Shell and Wal-Mart.

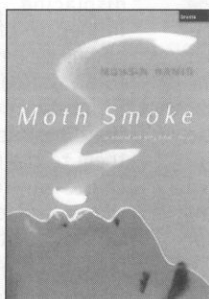
The book ends with an essay by Alex Callinicos, a leading British socialist and Professor of Political Science at York University. Callinicos makes a strong case for building the movement on the basis of inclusivity and respect for a broad range of methods and opinions. Callinicos argues the case for mass revolution as being the only realistic way to replace capitalism with a society based on the values of equality, democracy and solidarity.

This book can be used as a resource to give to those who are interested in the waves of mass protest against this system. It spells out clear and compelling arguments for changing the world we live in, how it is run, and offers alternatives. Get your hands on the book, read it and then pass it round your workplace or college. It really is that good.



All books
available from
BOOKMARKS
PO BOX 1648
Dublin 8

Moth Smoke' Mohsin Hamid Granta £9.99



Indian writers, like Irish writers, seem to be hot commodities these days. In India, the frenzy has caused a writing boom, inspired by the success of Salman Rushdie and most recently Arundhati Roy. But what about literary Pakistan? Fewer writers have emerged from there and those who have are often overshadowed by, or lumped together with, their Indian counterparts.

Though their voices are distinct, many Pakistani and Indian writers do share a concern for the defining moment in their nations' histories: the partition of the subcontinent in 1947. Mohsin Hamid's bold and ironic first novel *Moth Smoke* is set long after that seminal event, but in its evocation of the anxieties of modern Pakistani life, the legacies of Partition are everywhere apparent.

Moth Smoke traces the spiralling downfall of Daru, a young intellectual in the border city of Lahore, Pakistan, during the summer of 1998, the year when Pakistan first detonated its nuclear bomb in a tit-for-tat race with India.

The novel exposes the underbelly of the young corrupt elite in Pakistan, whose wealth comes from drug trafficking, foreign bank accounts and gun-running. Daru, the central character, has been sacked by his bank and looks unlikely to get another job as he does not have a foreign degree and no bank or multinational will employ him without one.

The loss coincides with the return

of his childhood friend Ozi, the son of a corrupt civil servant, after several years in the US. The difference in their social and economic status is immediately apparent and Ozi, an opportunistic snob, sets out to acquire richer and more influential companions. Daru becomes entangled and then falls deeply in love with Ozi's wife, the beautiful and fiercely independent Mumtaz, who is uneasy with her role as a mother and wife of a socialite, and who leads a nocturnal and secret existence as a muckraking reporter.

His life gets increasingly out of control against the background of a crumbling Pakistani economy and mounting pressure from the right wing to have and use nuclear arms. Pakistan has a foreign debt of \$36 billion and two thirds of its budget is geared to debt servicing and defence spending, while there are staggering levels of poverty. As one character puts it, "This nuclear race is no joke — poor people are in trouble."

Moth Smoke is part of a new generation of writing that is different in style from Salman Rushdie's magical realism and is an impressive debut novel. It takes an old formula- the love triangle - and turns it into something beautiful and luminous, while also providing a powerful insight into the mechanisms of a country like Pakistan, with its multitude of problems and the great, almost unimaginable, divide that separates rich from poor.

Clichéd it may sound but it seems that the whole world has gone Harry Potter crazy. The upcoming film, the merchandising and the multi-million dollar promotion campaign have taken over the collective imagination of children and adults alike. We've seen this before where trend after vacuous trend is pushed cynically by toy companies and films become a promotion for the product (Pokemon anyone?). The Harry Potter hype has only just begun. However, behind the bluff and the glitzy campaign there is a story worth telling, which children will love and which adults should take a peek at as well.

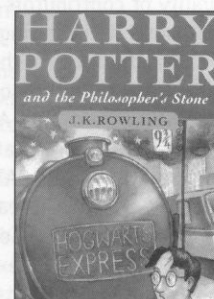
For anyone who doesn't know, the books are framed around the adventures of Harry Potter, a boy who at the age of eleven is invited to go to Hogwarts, school for Wizards. But Harry is a young

wizard with a history. When Harry was a newborn baby, a wizard by the name of Voldemort was rallying his forces of evil, and killing all who opposed him. All wizards were in fear. When he tried to kill Harry, he failed and the spell he cast rebounded on him, almost destroying him in the process. Through each of the books the spectre of Voldemort remains. He is weak, but he is still alive and his followers are hidden but waiting for his return.

Harry, living in the muggle (non-magic) community where magic is frowned upon, is famous amongst wizards but is unaware of this fame. The books follow Harry's adventures, while taking in "adult" issues in a way that avoids a preaching or lecturing style. At the base level, the books are an extremely good read. Rowling has constructed a wonderful world in

The Harry Potter series

JK Rowling
Bloomsbury.
£7.80 each



Hogwarts, full of dragons, a game played on broomsticks called Quidditch and a school timetable including lessons in transfiguration and potions. Every page has some amusing image or adventure. The characters in the book moan about teachers (Prof-essor Snape the potions master particularly) and break rules, just the sort of behaviour that app-eals to children and adults. However there is more to the books than a good yarn.

The books explore, among other issues, racism, fascism, class and slavery! Perhaps this seems more the property of a dry political tome, but it is done in tandem with such a compelling plot that the reader takes on these issues almost unbeknownst to them. J K Rowling introduces prejudices between the magical and non-magical community, and we see the terrible figure of Voldemort and his followers in a movement that wants to destroy all muggles or muggle born (even those who have become wizards or witches). Voldemort and his followers are devotees of Dark magic – the parallel with fascism is astounding. The description of Voldemort's rise puts the reader in no doubt that he should be resisted. By the end of Book Four, the Goblet of Fire, Harry and his friends are joining the fight against Voldemort. Future books in the series will continue the theme of the struggle against Voldemort.

There, in a nutshell, is the brilliance of the books. Rowling has developed a fictional masterpiece, full of fantastic creatures and adventures and challenging people to take a stand on 'the outcome'. The reader is enveloped in Harry's world and can find it hard to get out. We can only hope that the Hollywood production doesn't lose any of the radical nature of the novels. See the film, but make sure to read the book (and try to avoid the merchandise).

Colm O Riain

Peadar O'Donnell: A revolutionary life

Donal O Drisceoil

£12.99

Cork University Press

Peadar O'Donnell's extraordinary life spanned the 20th century. He was a national teacher, trade union organiser, IRA fighter in the Tan war, IRA Executive member in the Civil War, political prisoner, political agitator, editor of *An Phoblacht*, founder of *The Bell* magazine, novelist, internationalist, socialist, republican and revolutionary.

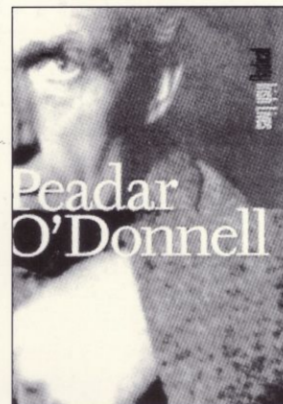
In his nineties, he was a key figure in the protests against the visit of Ronald Reagan to Ireland. Over 70 years earlier in Monaghan he organised workers to take over the mental asylum where they hoisted the red flag, set up a soviet and united workers across the sectarian divide for a general strike.

During the Irish War of Independence, O'Donnell argued that the republican movement inevitably would divide along class lines: "The middle classes are nervous peace-seekers, who fear the advance of proletarian power more than they abhor the old tyranny". O'Donnell was the instigator of the mass campaign against the payment of land annuities to Britain. The labour movement ignored the issue and that helped Fianna Fáil to take it up and to get elected in 1932 (and divert the campaign away from struggle).

Though never a member of the Communist Party, he was always close to their thinking. In the twenties and thirties he was jailed repeatedly and was a hate figure for the Catholic right. O'Donnell became the key figure in attempting to push republicanism in a socialist direction. The most successful attempt was the Republican Congress.

The Republican Congress was born from the 1934 IRA Army Convention. Peadar O'Donnell and others issued the following call, "We believe that a Republic of Ireland will never be achieved except through a struggle which uproots capitalism on its way. We cannot conceive of a free Ireland with a subject working class; we cannot conceive of a subject Ireland with a free working class". They were expelled from the IRA.

The purpose of the Congress was "to break", in the words of co-founder George Gilmore, "the illusion that the Fianna Fáil leadership was leading toward their freedom in Ireland". The Congress sought to join republican radicals,



trade union activists, socialists and others into a united body. It made an impressive start, campaigning on the issue of housing, supporting strikes and organising against fascism.

Most significant were the Congress's efforts to organise Protestant workers in the North. O'Donnell once told how he organised a group of Protestant workers to join a banned republican march. When the march reached police lines everybody knelt to say the rosary. O'Donnell described how he could get Protestant workers to march with republicans against the state but he wouldn't and couldn't get them to say the rosary. Hundreds of working class activists from Belfast's Shankill Road went to the annual republican Bodenstown commemoration, in 1934, carrying a banner reading "Wolfe Tone Commemoration 1934, Shankill Road Belfast Branch. Break the connection with Capitalism." The Republicans physically attacked them. The Republican Congress pushed republicanism to breaking point. But the break wasn't made. The Congress split on whether to fight for a workers' republic or a just the republic. The movement collapsed.

While there are some better books on the politics of the left in Ireland — it is about time someone republished Mike Milotte's important *Communism in Modern Ireland* — but O Drisceoil has done an impressive job in pulling together the key political arguments of O'Donnell's life in a short book. At the end of the book O Drisceoil argues that O'Donnell's life was less a history of a failed revolutionary than of a failed revolution. It is important to take inspiration from the life of one of Ireland's finest rebels and to learn the lessons of that failure.

Simon Basketter

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Something is happening but they don't know what it is

BACK

simon basketter

"The protesters are winning. They are winning on the streets. Before too long they will be winning the argument. Globalisation is fast becoming a cause without credible champions", according to the bosses' paper, the *Financial Times*.

The article continues: "There is a cry for a different set of values. It is often hard to find. But it is there. And it explains why the protesters are winning. Their constituency stretches well beyond the mostly young activists we see on the streets. Many who abhor their tactics share their unease."

Elsewhere in the same issue of the paper (August 17th) "Either they (the world leaders) must barricade their meetings behind even more rolls of barbed wire, or they must find a way to deal with some of the concerns of this increasingly vociferous movement."

Now those people concerned with ruling the world pay attention to the *Financial Times*. In the run up to the World Bank/IMF meeting in Washington at the end of September, a man called Mats Karlsson has been very busy. Mr Karlsson, is the World Bank's vice-president for external affairs (that's public relations to you or me). He wrote a report for the bank which states, "The openness revolution and the anti-globalisation backlash have brought the bank's poverty reduction mission under global scrutiny," it said. "Support in the authorising environment for the World Bank and other multilateral agencies is weakening." The report, written before Gothenburg or Genoa, says that the bank must work harder to engage with its critics.

It proposes increased engagement with non-governmental organisations, noting that polls found that "NGOs are often better trusted on governance issues than the public sector or big business".

In the report Mr Karlsson called for a system to handle concerted e-mail campaigns or attacks and said the external relations department was "exploring ways to play a more active role on the web sites of bank critics".

Mr Karlsson takes his commitment for engagement seriously. "Social activists have had an impact on the way the World Bank does business, a senior official of the bank told an international conference of activists. But violent protests are an obstruction of democracy", said Karlsson in a speech at a meeting of 800 representatives of NGOs from around the world in August.

"Rather than acting as an institution of oppression, as some activists suggest, the World Bank shares a common goal of fighting world poverty", said Karlsson. "There is nothing wrong at all in using public demonstration to show your concern and to vent your frustration with slow change. You have had an impact on the way the World Bank works. And you still do. We need to see leaders of civil society emerge from this open revolution. We need to create a trusted space where we can work together, with



The alternative is not constructive engagement with those destroying the world (and it certainly isn't hugging them) but actively increasing the level of "unrest"

these new interested leaders, and make sure that the changes actually happen."

Now clearly this is all toss and nonsense, but unfortunately it works.

While the GAP are unlikely to be overly successful with its current range of street

riot wear (I kid you not – some people have no shame), engaging with critics is a pretty standard PR practice. So even though the next WTO meeting is in Qatar to prevent protest, and a number of NGOs are boycotting the proceedings, some feel they have to go. Despite calls for a boycott, tragically most Irish NGOs are going to sit in the lobby of a hotel in Qatar to be patronised.

With one hand, our rulers try to incorporate as many respectable people as possible in order to disarm them. With the other, they will use the utmost force against those who oppose them. The World Bank/IMF, the WTO and the rest have no interest in real engagement. They are merely scared at the growing level of global opposition to them and their agenda. If they can fog the issues with pleasant words, then they have succeeded. In this sense getting Bono to hug the Butcher of Chechnya, Putin, in Genoa was a PR success of the highest order. We shouldn't be that surprised. It is, after all, only a year since Bono hugged the Pope, so he clearly gets off on hugging reactionaries.

The alternative is not constructive engagement with those destroying the world (and it certainly isn't hugging them) but actively increasing the level of "unrest". It is "unrest" rather than listening to the weasel words of the spin-doctors that will get the attention of the hypocrites at the top.

If there was any final proof needed that the ruling class and their hangers-on will say anything then I offer this:

"The assets of the world's top 3 billionaires are more than the combined GNP of all of the Least Developed Countries and their 600 million people. What is more disturbing is that in today's globalising world, which offers such huge opportunities for development, the gap between rich and poor countries is increasing rather than decreasing. At the beginning of the last century the income per capita in the world's richest countries was three times that of the income in the poorest countries. At the beginning of this new century the ratio is sixty to one."

"Such extreme levels of income inequality must be unacceptable to any society which has, as one of its core values, the need to eradicate poverty."

The speaker of these fine words? Bertie Ahern, (if you were wondering, it was his farewell speech to Bill Clinton, at an event sponsored by a large multinational).

ERRATA

Insert the following line at the end of page 17

... that embraces the whole of the region.

Insert the following lines below the photo on page 19:

Left Column

Around the mid seventies, after nearly ten years of heightened

Right Column

has the economic and political weight and clout of the working class.